DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 279 474 RC 016 146

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TITLE Dream into Reality: Career Education in a Changing Economy. Harvesting the Harvesters. Book 9.

INSTITUTION State Univ. of New York, Potsdam. Coll. at Potsdam.

SPONS AGENCY Department of Education, Washington, DC.; New York State Education Dept., Albany. Bureau of Migrant Education.
PUB DATE Oct 86
NOTE 17p.; For related documents, see RC 016 138-147. Photographs may not reproduce clearly.
AVAILABLE FROM School of Professional Studies, Potsdam College, Potsdam, NY 13676.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Correspondence Study; Dropout Attitudes; *Dropout Prevention; Dropout Programs; *Educational Attitudes; Elementary Secondary Education; Inservice Teacher Education; *Migrant Children; *Migrant Education; Preservice Teacher Education; Relevance (Education); Teacher Influence; *Teacher Student Relationship; Units of Study; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS Migrant Educators National Training OutReach

ABSTRACT

The ninth of a series of 10 study units for a Migrant Educators' National Training OutReach (MENTOR) correspondence course explores reasons for dropping out among migrant students, ways to lower dropout risk, vocational education needs, and role models. Designed for use in preservice or inservice teacher education, the unit points to the predominance of school-related factors in dropout decisions and the prevalence of perceptions of teacher indifference. Discussion of ways to reduce dropout risk includes problem recognition, high risk student identification, elimination of elementary school flunking practices, compensatory programs, and individual attention. The unit examines the successes and failures of vocational education and special vocational needs of migrant students and emphasizes the need for success stories and role models. A 46-item bibliography and list of state offices of migrant education are included. (LFL)

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BOOK 9

HARVESTING the HARVESTERS

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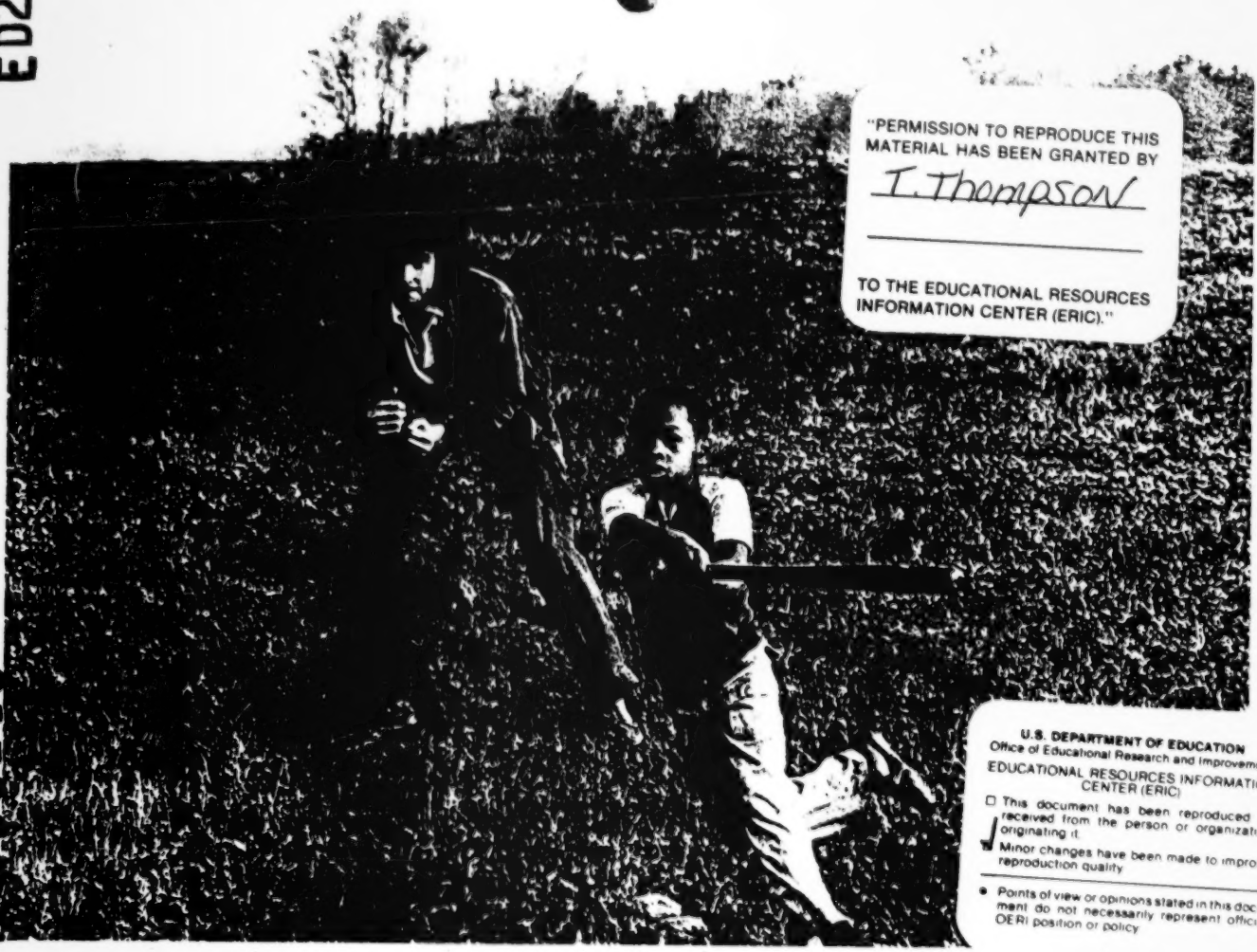
DREAM INTO REALITY
Career Education in a Changing Economy

October 1986



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RC016146

The best thing about being a teacher is keeping dreams alive.
Robert Harris

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MENTOR wishes to thank the hundreds of people who volunteered to help the project with advice, encouragement, materials, and expertise of all sorts.

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MENTOR wishes to thank the dozens of people at Potsdam College whose help was invaluable.

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Dream Into Reality

Migrant Educators must forge links between the world of education and the world of work, between schools and careers, between (to put it baldly) study and money. These links are more complicated than commonly assumed, particularly for high-risk young people. Statistics that show a positive correlation between years of schooling and lifetime earnings may seem to be meaningless to an improverished American adolescent. Young people lack experience, but they do not lack intelligence. Too often the decision to drop out of school is logical and rational, given the student's perspective. If the school is a hostile environment, a place where past failures suggest future humiliations, the decison to leave may be sadly rational.

We must know why so many migrant students drop out. We must work to keep them in school. We must remain commited to those who have dropped out, trying to get them into educational or vocational programs that can help them realize at least some of their potential. We need to provide experiences, in school and out, to enable them to enter the economic mainstream. We need to offer them role-models as proof that migrants can succeed.

This problem is vast. Much must be done on every grade level for migrants of every sort to give them dreams of careers as varied as life can offer. This little booklet has a modest aim: to sensitize you to the issue, in the hope that you will provide leadership in creating support networks to help migrants cope with the problems of succeeding in schools where most have so often failed and then moving first into and then upwards in a marketplace that has never wanted them. It would require a miracle on the order of the loaves and fishes to get 90% of our migrant students through high school, yet even if we accomplish that, it will not be enough, not nearly enough. The American economy is so strange that some college graduates find themselves working as migrant agricultural laborers after a run of bad luck. A migrant with a high school diploma is much better off than a migrant without one, but even a migrant with that diploma still faces formidable obstacles in this rapidly changing economy.

Migrant Educators must not think in little increments, a few percentage points here in the dropout rate, a slight gain in reading scores. We may take pride in such accomplishments, sure, but meawhile we need a quantum leap to new and more ambitious, more aggressive ways to help our students in tangible and immediate ways even as we try to get them to dream more beautiful dreams. When as many middle school migrants dream of being architects and physicists and ballerinas as nonmigrants dream such dreams, we will be much better off. Without such dreams, passivity and resignation can contribute to low aspirations that become low achievements.

So we must simultaneously provide pragmatic emergency help for young people whose lives will be permanently blighted without such assistance while arranging for a sea change in American education so that today's younger migrant children have real opportunities when they reach adolescence. The task is literally Herculean. To cleanse the Augean Stables, Hercules diverted the river Alpheus to remove the manure left by 3,000 oxen over thirty years. Migrant Educators must divert the river Business-as-usual to cleanse more than thirty years of crap out of the curriculum. The Carnegie Task Force says the way we are educating our young people is in danger creating a permanent underclass. The vast majority of today's migrant children will be doomed to that underclass unless we revolutionize Migrant Education in the next few years. We must ask more of ourselves, more of our students, more of our society. More of the same will not do.

Who is Dropping Out and Why

The dropout rate among migrants is a touchy subject. All migrant statistics are problematical. Dropout statistics are controversial. The figure of 85% is bandied about, as is the figure of 90% suggesting that only a little better than one migrant in ten is graduating from high school. Some administrators asked Mentor not to cite such figures, because they are estimates and because they might give aid and comfort to our enemies, the budget-cutters who want to eliminate funds for Migrant Education programs by arguing that they have failed, or that they cost too much, or that the federal government has no real role to play in the local issues of education.

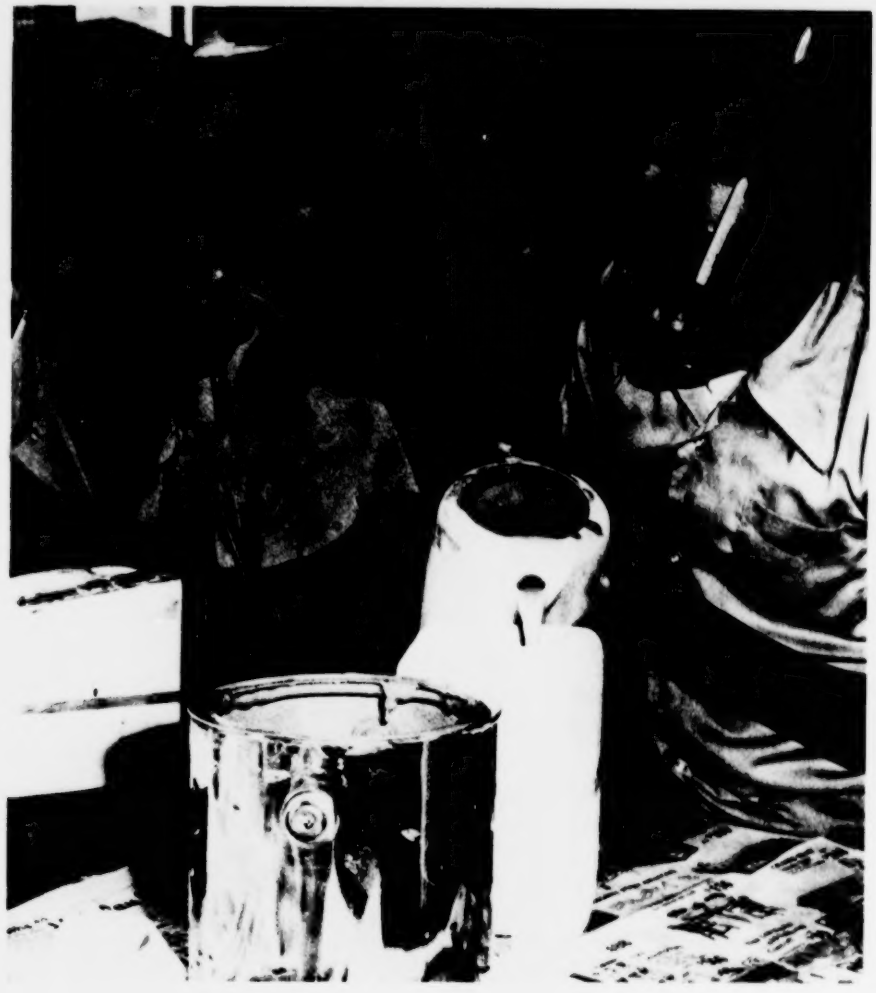
Well, stuff and nonsense. The truth is that Migrant Education programs have succeeded. Students in programs succeed at a much higher rate than students not served. As for costing too much, the programs have cost far too little. The nation must have the will to provide quality education for everyone, migrant or nonmigrant, in slum or in suburbia, at whatever cost. If the Pentagon budget has to be reduced or corporate profits taxed, so be it. We must say these things out loud, in plain terms. The nation is at risk because our education system is failing. Migrant Educators have the skills to help improve American education. We cannot be timid because pollsters say the public mood is conservative. We are failing most of our migrants. 90%? 85%? 75%? The figure is disgraceful. Underfunded, overworked migrant programs are in some sense little more than a fig leaf to hide our shame.

Migrant Educators must tell the truth: we know how to help these people. We must say, Give us the resources and we will give you nurses and teachers and engineers and entrepreneurs instead of welfare recipients and the chronically underemployed.

The Interstate Migrant Secondary Services Program provided some reliable statistics in 1985. Here is why the migrants who dropped out of school said they did it.

Reasons For Leaving School	% Total	% Male	% Female
Failing classes	34.3	37.1	31.5
Didn't Like School	29.8	32.6	26.8
Few Credits for Graduation	27.7	32.0	23.1
Had to Work, Family Needed Money	25.0	29.1	20.3
Didn't Feel A Part of School	22.0	24.3	19.5
Problems With Teachers	21.6	28.6	13.9
Felt Older Than Other Students	15.7	16.2	15.0
Needed at Home	14.4	9.7	19.5
Got Suspended	13.3	20.0	6.6
Problems With Other Students	13.1	15.7	10.4
Family Moved a lot	12.7	11.9	13.7
School Work Too Hard	12.2	14.0	10.4
Friends Dropped Out	11.8	13.7	9.8
Got Married	11.4	3.4	20.1
English Was a Problem	11.0	15.3	6.3
Family Illness	9.3	6.3	12.5
Pregnancy	8.8	0.1	17.2
Personal Illness	7.1	4.9	9.4
Problems with Counselors	6.2	9.0	3.1

Here is some of the IMSSP analysis of that raw data:



The responses centered on school problems and family problems. School problems dominated reasons for quitting.

Not liking school was most frequently based on disinclination to learn, boring teachers, and fighting and/or talking back to teachers. Some students spoke of teacher apathy and negativism toward migrants. Other dislikes centered on specific required courses.

Occasionally students expressed a feeling of discrimination. They felt that, regardless of aptitude and incentive, migrant students are placed in non-academic courses. Migrant students are more likely to be disciplined with out-of-school suspension, while non-migrants tend to be suspended in school.

Continuing family economic problems were viewed as a common reason for dropping out. Students who miss school to supplement their family income become increasingly discouraged as they fall further behind. Junior high school students are less likely to become discouraged than senior high students because their progress from grade to grade tends to be based on competence, not credit accrual and clock hours of attendance. Most junior high students felt that if they were doing "ok" when they withdrew in the spring, they would be promoted to the next grade when they returned in the fall.

Students also mentioned drugs, pregnancy and marriage. Most students said that drug use was a problem, but only a few saw it as dropout related. For students who drop out because of pregnancy, half the students felt that even if kids return to school, the stigma and responsibility of parenting are too overwhelming, and the students would not finish.

A large minority of junior high migrant students expect they will not graduate, i.e., have already been conditioned to believe they will drop out!

It is important to keep in mind that most of the reasons given by students for leaving school are school-related. This is a key area for migrant program involvement. While advocacy with parents can help some students to stay in school, many more students can be helped through advocacy with schools.

Some of the statistics, in their austere eloquence, would break your heart if you had to concentrate on the sadness in them. One result of the study suggested that the students who did *not* drop out, or who completed High School Equivalency, were influenced by some individual who gave them special encouragement at a crucial juncture, someone who expressed an interest, someone who seemed to care, someone confident that they could make it if they stuck to it. That being so, consider the figures on "Ecouragement from teachers:"

A lot	31.9%
A little	49.2%
None	16.6%

Fewer than 1/3 of the dropouts felt they got a lot of encouragement from their teachers. Nearly 2/3 felt they got little or none. What the hell is going on here? Discrimination? Apathy and teacher burn-out? Incompetence on a massive scale? The kindest interpretation would be cultural antagonism, as middle class teachers use harsh techniques that may seem effective with middle class students whose self-esteem is reinforced outside the schools and whose futures seem secure, techniques certain to fail with migrants. Whatever interpretation you choose, it is criminal that 2/3 of the migrants who drop out feel they got little or no encouragement from their teachers. Can teachers succeed with high-risk students without encouraging them? They can not.

A Perception of Teacher Indifference

According to the McNeil/Lehrer Newshour on September 2, 1986, the national dropout rate is nearly 30%, nearly one in three, with about half of Black and Hispanic students failing to graduate. New York City is spending 30 million dollars on a dropout prevention program yet students interviewed for the TV segment cited teacher indifference as a primary reason for giving up. Dr. Victor Herbert, Director of the city-wide effort, said "I believe every other youngster entering high school is likely to drop out unless we do some-

thing dramatic, effective, and efficient." If the kids interviewed are on the right track, the most dramatic, effective, and efficient thing we could do is provide teachers who care about the students and let them know they care.

Even when you care, care a great deal, the work of teaching adolescents tempted to drop out is frustrating, and that frustration is a two-way street. New York City's Brandeis High School has a mini-school for high-risk students with smaller classes to allow for individual attention. Stan Feingold, Director of the mini-school, cites low self-esteem as a large part of the problem. He says it is frustrating for these young adults when they cannot master the work of the 9th or 10th grade and that frustration can lead to anger, anger to hostility, hostility to classroom confrontations, the confrontations to a sense of despair. We must keep in mind that it is difficult to be an American adolescent even when you have good grades, money in your pocket, and reasonably good prospects for a career. High-risk adolescents known that the odds are against them. They need to *know* their teachers care.

Reducing The Risk

The newspaper article by Hilmer Anderson is a handy abstract of the spate of reports about the nation being at risk. A couple of sentences are worth repeating. "It is increasingly difficult for the poorly educated to find jobs." "A growing number of permanently unemployed people seriously strains our social fabric" "The nation's schools were crippled by poorly trained, demoralized teachers."

If you are poorly trained, it will be your own fault. The works listed on the back covers of these Mentor books contain the accumulated wisdom of several generations of competent, committed educators. Read them and think about them and integrate them into your life and work and you will become a real professional whether you earn a Ph.D. or settle for the informal pleasures of the autodidact. The Migrant Education network will help your professional growth.

If you are demoralized, snap out of it. Your students need all your energy, all your idealism. *You* can reduce the risk, for your students, for your country. While recent reports seem worried that we will not produce the elite we need to compete against the Japanese and Germans in the high tech future, they seemed less worried about the dropout rate.

The High School Dropout Prevention Network of Southeast Michigan was formed in the fall of 1984 under the sponsorship of the College of Education of Wayne State University and the Metropolitan Detroit Youth Foundation.

Several national and local trends led to the Network formation:

Recent national reports, such as "A Nation At Risk", had challenged the country to raise educational standards. But would raising the standards mean that more youngsters would fall short of the standards? Would a result be a higher dropout rate? Were these reports neglecting the needs of potential dropouts? If so, would these reports increase the likelihood of the development of a permanent American underclass?

Graduation Rate—recent national graduation statistics released by the U.S. Department of Education showed an alarming trend. Whereas in 1972, 77.2 percent of ninth graders were going on to graduate, in 1982 the figure had declined to 72.8 percent. More than one quarter of the ninth graders in the U.S. were not graduating. In Michigan, the graduation rate had declined over the same period from 81 percent to 72.7 percent. The graduation rate had declined over these 10 years in all but 8 states. Although graduation rates had increased in the U.S. since 1900, for the first time there appeared to be a reversal.

Minorities— *The impact on minorities is equally stunning. Among Blacks in Michigan, only 51% are graduating; among Hispanics, only 45 percent. One recent national report found in urban high schools a dropout rate of 80 percent for Puerto Ricans and 85 percent*

Study: U.S. Education Must Change Radically

By Hilmer Anderson

CORONADO, Calif. (UPI) —America's schools must change radically to train students for highly skilled jobs because the nation can no longer afford a workforce of Horatio Algers who are simply willing to work hard, a report released Thursday said.

The sweeping study by the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy said the keys to the necessary and broad redirection of American education are teachers with substantial professional training and the freedom to set and achieve state and local goals for their students.

"While it was once possible for people to succeed in this society if they were simply willing to work hard, it is increasingly difficult for the poorly educated to find jobs," the report said.

That work ethic was immortalized best in the story of Horatio Alger, a fictional character who believed success in America was the result of dedication and that all had an equal chance to succeed.

"A growing number of permanently unemployed people seriously strains our social fabric. A heavily technology-based economy will be unable to invest vast sums to maintain people who cannot contribute to the nation's productivity."

The report was the product of a year-long effort by a 14-member panel that included IBM chief scientist Lewis Branscomb; Mary Futrell, president of the National Education Association; Fred Hechinger, president of The New York Times Company Foundation; New Jersey Gov. Thomas Kean and Bill Honig, California superintendent of public eduction.

In 1983, the Education Department's landmark study, "A Nation At Risk," found that the nation's schools were crippled by poorly trained, demoralized teachers. The report spurred a nationwide improvement campaign.

The Carnegie study said the nation, in adapting to the high-tech future, must field an army of highly skilled teachers who can raise the level of education to higher levels from kindergarten through college.

The report recommends:

- *Restructuring school to allow teachers more freedom to decide how they can meet state and local goals. The teachers would also be held more accountable if they do not meet those goals.*

among Native Americans. There is a school in northern Michigan where there is an Indian reservation and not one Indian student has ever graduated from that high school.

Our concerns are three:

1. *There is a relationship between lack of education and many other social problems such as crime, substance abuse, and economic destitution.*
2. *The dropout problem results in wasted lives, wasted lives by the hundreds of thousands.*
3. *There is the problem of generational repetition. The young women who were pregnant in 1968 have 16 year old children who all too often have children of their own.*

This is from "School Dropouts in Perspective," a 1985 report by Michael W. Sherraden prepared for the Business Advisory Commission of the Education Commission of the States:

The U.S. educational system has, historically, performed exceptionally well in enrolling and graduating increasing proportions of the population. However, this positive trend halted about 20 years ago. At about that time, many youth problems began to increase substantially. Trends have included rising crime, vandalism, drug and alcohol abuse, joinings cults, declining political participation, out-of-wedlock childbirth, and deaths by homicide and suicide. These seem to form a constellation of related problems rather than a series of separate trends.

The roots of this general deterioration in the youth population lie in long-term changes in the youth labor market. Before and during the early years of industrialization, nearly all young people were employed in one form or another. As industrialization progressed during the late 19th century and as immigration increased, demand for youth labor declined. Education expanded and gradually replaced the labor market as the primary social institution for young people. Today, however, the educational system has become overloaded. High school education is increasingly removed from labor market opportunity and young people, recognizing this fact, are becoming disengaged from the educational process and from society in general.

Here is an excerpt from another report for the same Commission by Samel Peng, "High School Dropouts: A National Concern."

In summary, the dropout rate in this nation is high. More than 25% of potential graduates (or more than one million youngsters) left school without graduating in recent years. The dropout rate is higher for Blacks, Hispanics, and generally for students from families of low socioeconomic status than for others. Since the dropout problem is also closely related to many broad social issues (like youth employment, transaction of youth into the labor market, intergroup disparities in economic opportunity, higher labor productivity and increased competitiveness of American industry), effort to obtain the information needed to describe and understand the dropout phenomenon would be a prudent investment for our society.

Dale Mann of Columbia Teachers College takes a more jaundiced look at this situation, suggesting that the problem persists at least in part because significant segments of the community profit from it. This is from his 1986 article, "Can We Help Dropouts?: Thinking About the Undoable:"

The fact that the dropout rate has not changed in such a long time suggests that not everyone regards this as a crisis. Teenager unemployment in central cities may be twice the employment rate of the Great Depression, but when an Administration representative describes out-of-work youth as the "industrial reserve of America", it does not take too much imagination to understand that cheap labor, available to practically any enterprise, has its uses and so by extension does a system which emits undertrained youth.

The High School Dropout Prevention Network of Michigan calls for a nationwide recognition of the terrible need to address this crisis:

Problem Recognition

The dropout problem needs to be more clearly recognized throughout the total community. The goal of increasing graduation rates needs to be more clearly established.

There is a need for school districts to recognize the dropout problem (to declare war on it), to set goals and to measure progress.

Each school district needs to publicly report graduation rates each year, set

an objective to improve the graduation rate by a certain percentage and include details of how they propose to make the improvement.

Declaring War on the Dropout Problem

America can declare war on the dropout problem. It can win that war, too. However, Migrant Education cannot cope with this in isolation. Only the national government, the states and the school districts have the resources. What Migrant Education can help provide is the expertise and the energy and the commitment.

Imagine every school in the United States with a High-Risk Officer. While a Truant Officer only keeps a child's body in school, a High-Risk Officer could see that the child thrived academically. After all, we know how to spot high-risk kids and what to do for them.

The HRO could flag every potential dropout. We know how to do that. Children from families below the poverty level get a flag. Children whose parents or older siblings did not graduate get a flag. Frequent truants get a flag. Students with woefully deficient basic skills get a flag. Students in trouble with the law or with drugs or alcohol get a flag. The accumulation of flags brings increased attention from the HRO and the school staff. We must spot these high-risk students early and begin effective intervention.

We know what keeps high-risk kids in school. Somebody who cares. Encouragement. Signs of progress, however modest. Participation in extra-curricular activities. A feeling of belonging. Goals at once attractive and within reach. Peer tutors. Familiy support for schooling. The HRO could orchestrate the network of teachers and counselors and coaches and social workers capable of sustaining an environment conductive to staying in school. This must be some educator's primary responsibility. In *every* school.

Any job that can be done by an illiterate can be done better, cheaper, and faster by machine.
William Brock,
Secretary of Labor

One Concrete Suggestion

We *know* that being overage is the leading indicator of dropout potential. We may conclude that the best way to eliminate this factor is to stop flunking kids in the primary grades.

Of course, the "high standards" people will want to flunk even more kids at every level, but they are wrong. It takes time to remedy deficiencies most migrants bring to Kindergarten and First Grade. These students must not be cruelly punished by separation from their coevals. Letting the underachievers remain with their age group is the best way of helping them catch up. A weak student who is older than his or her classmates may sense such a great distance to be made up that the effort seems futile.

Here is what the IMSSP survey says about the relationship between being overage and dropping out of school:

Being overage is the leading predictor of dropout behavior; migrant students are at exceptionally high risk.

Fact:*"Being retained one grade increases the risk by 40-50%; two grades increases the risk by 90%." (Bachman, Jerold G., et. al., 1971.* Youth in Transition, Volume III: Dropping Out-Problem or Symptom?)

It is easy to stop flunking kids in grade school. Just stop. It is bad policy. Migrant Educators must realize this and say so. Yes, deficiencies must be made up, but that can be done while the students progress through the system with the other children their age.

This may seem controversial. We cannot have a revolution in American education without some controversy. Flunking kids in elementary school is dooming many of them to almost certain failure by high school. We must find ways to help them while they remain with others their age. Period.

"Complex Problems Require Ambitious Solutions"

Dale Mann says complex problems require ambitious solutions, so "the problem of early school leaving ought to implicate everyone—schools, youth employment programs, civic agencies, parents, community-based organizations, business and industry." Part of your responsibility as a Migrant Educator is to create this network and keep it in good repair. Dale Mann provides a key argument for you, that society saves a lot of money by keeping kids in school:

To begin with, there are great gains in removing or ameliorating the things that later cause kids to drop out, especially school failure and a lack of mastery of the basic skills. Howe points out that . . . "It costs only $500 to provide a year of compensatory education to a student before he or she gets into academic trouble. It costs over $3,000 when one such student repeats one grade once." Lawrence J. Schweinhart and David P. Weikart have shown that two years of preschool education for one child cost $5,984 and returned $14,819 in savings from a reduced need for later special education ($3,353), increases in projected lifetime earnings ($10,798), and the mother's income from paid employment during the hours the child was in the program ($668). The best way to avoid a high school dropout is to make the elementary school more successful. A special case can be made for the junior high school. Large numbers of already fragile adolescents fail to make the transition either into or out of such middle grades. Going up-stream to minimize school failure, maximize school success, and provide a foundation of basic skills pays high dividends.

Four C's

Dale Mann says we need 4 Cs: Cash, Caring, Computers, and Coalitions.

If you do not have the cash, lobby for it, write grants, hold fundraisers. Demystify computers so your students will feel at home in high tech environments. Build coalitions.

"Caring" would seem to be the easiest C. If you didn't care, you wouldn't be in this line of endeavor, right? But on the whole, disadvantaged students are unloved by school systems. Again from Dale Mann:

Asking teachers to care about these kids is asking a lot, since teaching them is seldom the system's most sought-after assignment and especially since the group at risk is likely to have clarified everyone's incompetence and frustration for years previous. But there is no substitute for adults (propably all adults) knowing young people by name, asking about their lives, assigning homework, grading homework, and returning homework. One consequence of that is that the institution cannot be very large and the pupil-teacher ratio has to be lower than typically found. One example of what the care/concern precept can do is Atlanta's "Community of Believers" where, unique among America's urban public

school systems, the lowest achieving youngsters are systematically identified and then paired with someone who has volunteered from the business community. Those adults are trained, tracked and supported in their work with individual, at-risk youngsters and the early results are encouraging.

Gary Wehlage's analysis of programs that work for marginal high school students supports the care/concern thesis. Wehlage found that successful programs were small with lots of personal contact; teachers had high expectations, used a wide range of instructional techniques, and cared about student progress; and the students were challenged to succeed at feasible tasks and had opportunities to take initiative.

Consider now some specific recommendations. First, from the National Committee on the Education of Migrant Children:

The NCEMC asked the 28 districts what each had done to keep students in school until they graduated. Factors listed included: part-time jobs; college scholarships; individual help from teachers; individualized curricula and special courses, including language arts, industrial arts, home and family living, and vocational programs; participation in athletics and other extracurricular activities; intensive counseling of pupils and parents; supportive services for students and families, including clothing, shoes, better housing and health care, and care for younger brothers and sisters so that high school students would not have to leave school to babysit.

Here are the conclusions of a 1985 study by the Migrant Youth Programs of New York State entitled "Perceptions of Why Migrant Students Drop Out of School and What Can Be Done to Encourage Them to Graduate:"

Conclusions and Recommendations

Findings: In-school students, dropouts, and parents identified the inability to get along with teachers as the number one reason why students leave school before graduation.

Recommendations: Administration and teaching staff should receive preservice and in-service training in the psychology of adolscents and on techniques for increasing their skills in becoming a more facilitative and helping professional. Tutors in the Migrant Program should also be exposed to such training.

Finding: The primary service schools or tutorials could provide to encourage students to stay in school is to develop opportunities for work study and training.

Recommendations: Migrant programs should set aside an adequate sum of money in each year's budget to provide students with opportunities for work experience and shadowing. Such a program has the effect of making a direct link between school and the world of work. Students are given opportunities to apply their knowledge and to really test their choices. In addition, students learn job skills, communications skills, and social skills necessary to compete in the real world.

Finding: Schools and tutorials should provide more guidance and counseling as a means of encouraging students to stay in school.

Recommendation: Students should be made aware of the services provided through each school's guidance department. Such services range from course scheduling to career education to personal counseling. Tutors in the migrant program should be trained to recognize school or personal problems at an early stage and should be able to make appropriate referrals when necessary.

Finding: Schools and tutorials could encourage kids to stay in school by providing in-school youth with an opportunity to make up course work.

Recommendation: Because of their mobility, migrant students often need to make up or complete course work. Rural school districts often are unable to provide any educational services above or beyond the normal school day. Therefore, late spring, summer, and early fall academic programs should be offered to migrant students in order that they may make up, complete, or start up new courses necessary for graduation. The PASS program (a correspondence type program) should be encouraged for migrant high school students to make up credits in which they are deficient while at the same time continuing their course work in the regular high school program.

Finding: Reading level is directly and positively related to general scholastic achievement in high school.

Recommendation: Tutoring in basic skills for adolescent students with educational need should be encouraged by Migrant Program administrators. Increased emphasis should be on reading, vocabulary, and other language skills.

Finding: Family attitude toward education is very positive. Family attitude towards the school is poor.

Recommendation: Schools and tutorial should involve both parents in their child's education whenever possible. Basically, parents feel the school is responsible for their child's education and schools feel parents are generally not supportive. Schools and tutorials need to give parents some ownership of the responsibility of educating their children. Education personnel can help parents provide a home environment that encourages learning ad parents could be encouraged to attend open nights, PTA meetings, etc. and to actively take an interest in their child's education. All avenues of communication and cooperation should be explored.

Finding: One-third of in-school students who expect to graduate identify college in their final plans.

Recommendation: Juniors and seniors should be made aware of educational and financial options available to them after high school graduation. General education and vocational education students should be encouraged to enter post secondary education programs when appropriate.

Finding: One-third of all in-school students who do not expect to graduate are undecided about their future plans.

Recommendation: All students should receive instruction in values clarification, decision-making, and goal setting as a part of their basic education. Such instruction could be included as part of a career education program.

Finding: Nearly half of the dropouts identify completion of a High School Equivalency Diploma as a future goal.

Recommendation: Dropouts should be provided opportunities to complete their secondary education through participation in ABE/GED classes, tutoring, GRASP, or High School Equivalency Programs. Efforts should be made to identify all dropouts and provide them with the above options.

Findings: Half the students surveyed were not involved in any extra-curricular activities.

Recommendations: Students should be encouraged to participate in after shool activities and to try out new leisure time activities.

General Recommendations

Programs and schools should be more effective with potential or actual dropouts if they include the following:

1. *Caring and skilled tutors, counselors, and administrators who believe that their students can learn.*
2. *A commitment from program administration that the dropout problem is a priority.*
3. *Work Experience*
4. *Emphasis on reading improvement and the practical application of math*
5. *Professional counseling*
6. *Career information that leads to job placement*
7. *Parent involvement*
8. *Relevancy of educational program.*

Roots of Restlessness

Many migrants drop out of school as adolescents only because that is their first legal opportunity to do it without going to jail. The problem begins in infancy, and increases in severity with each passing year. While we need especially good programs for adolescents, we must begin to address the problem at every level.

Many studies suggest that the middle school requires special attention. In "Career and Vocational Development of Bilingual Students" (1978) by Edwin T. Rios and William E. Hansen, they write that "The school system loses its holding power on bilingual children during the seventh through ninth grades when the child is physically able to satisfy unskilled requirements of the world of work. It is at this level that career exploration should be introduced."

On a more impressionistic level, here is Robert Coles:

By the time migrant children are nine and ten and eleven they have had their education, learned their lessons. In many cases they have long since stopped even the pretense of school. They are working and helping out with younger children, or playing and getting ready for dating and loving, for becoming parents and following their parents' footsteps, thousands and thousands of those footsteps. As for their minds, they are, to my eye, an increasingly sad group of children. They have their fun, their outbursts of games and jokes and teasing and taunting and laughing; but they are for too long stretches of time downcast and tired and bored and indifferent and, to themselves, very unkind. They feel worthless, blamed, frowned upon, spoken ill of. Life itself, the world around them, even their own parents, everything that is, seems to brand them, stigmatize them, view them with disfavor, and in a million ways call them to account—lace into them, pick on them, tell them off, dress them down.

We must have early intervention, in the family setting before school begins, in the primary grades, in the middle schools. We cannot wait until they are teenagers and then teach them to be welders or hairdressers and feel we did enough. One wag said, "The dropout problem begins in the womb." That's a terrible pun but a pungent truth. From the moment of conception, the migrant child faces a high-risk of academic failure. We must do better at every age level.

Vocational Education: The Downside

Migrant Educators must admit that we face a dilemma: migrants need vocational programs, yet the track record of these ventures is mixed. Here is Frank Riessman:

There should be more work-study programs. At the same time, purely vocational training should be de-emphasized in the schools, since this training often becomes obsolete before it can be used; also, special 'trade' and 'vocational' schools should be discontinued, unless the vocational curriculum is liberal in approach and broad in character. Such schools are often used as dumping grounds for students who are not wanted elsewhere.

Here is the section from *The Shopping Mall High School* on vocational education:

Even in the most selective programs, many voc/tech students are different

from top-track students in one important respect: for them, school has not been a winning experience. They are students who haven't really learned to cope. As a result, social skills or survival skills have to be emphasized—the rules of work and community life that top-track students already know and largely respect. A twenty-five-year veteran of the auto mechanics shop had each potential student and his parents sign a contract, his formal treaty, acknowledging the program's rules: students were required to maintain a C average in both academic and voc/tech courses, wear safety glasses and work clothes, maintain the work area, and avoid illegal drugs. The contract also outlined the school's attendance policy, which he said caused many students to lose interest; ten absences could mean expulsion from the program (but not from the school). By sticking to this rule he had few problems with student absences.

These standards for entry to a special program and the possibility of forced exit if performance is not up to snuff—a possibility that does not exist in the school's regular program—combine to create a sense of specialness in these vocational/technical programs, and an incentive to do well. But the existence of treaties that are more demanding than the usual accommodations doesn't help to minimize the skepticsm frequently expressed about voc/tech programs. They may teach useful vocational skills, but the content of voc/tech academic courses is often watered down by work-related material. The courses are designed for students who don't like academic work, and so the content is changed to emphasize job or career information and to include activities such as filling out job application forms. Still, voc/tech teachers resent the suggestion that what they teach is easier and feel it prevents them from attracting even better students and raising standards and status even higher. "It irritates me that this (program) isn't on a par with [honors] courses," one vocational teacher said. "That keeps unfairly downplayed the academic quality of the course. I go through trigonometrics and circuitry. It should be [honors]." A boy enrolled in another voc/tech program complained, "our vocational math is harder than academic math. We have different formulas, harder formulas, like the rates of speed of feed. . . Our electronic math is harder, too."

But despite criticisms that voc/tech training is a poor substitute for academics and research that says that vocational education doesn't deliver on its promises for better jobs and employment, students believe that they are learning usable skills. They see clear connections between what they are learning and work they want to do. "When you're doing something in the shop, it's not like somebody told you something you might forget," one aspiring carpenter said. "If you're cutting a piece of stock and you break your cut, then you've got to figure out why. You know, you've done it once. But if someone tells you that in a classroom, you might not catch on." "Some of my friends, they wish they were in the carpentry class," his friend observed. "They get sick and tired of just sitting in the other parts of the building and not doing anything." The third member of this group said, "In a classroom you write papers that eventually get thrown away or burned. But if you're making something, like a carpenter makes a house, he can see it twenty years later and tell his kids that he made that house."

These students receive unusual services in the shopping mall high school because there are a number of people, and their Congressional representatives, who believe that work-related training is somehow superior to bookwork, that books and papers don't stand up like houses. And many students feel good about skills training and think they learn best that way. Others disagree. This educational debate has been running ever since federal vocational legislation was passed in 1917 and is not likely to be settled soon. Particularly in the current climate, where many people want education to be more practical, more immediately useful, the public resources that ensure the existence of this special enclave are likely to keep flowing. The mall will continue to offer special status to some students who are not interested in academic word.

Vocational Education: The Upside

Rios and Hansen remind us that career programs afford an excellent opportunity for teaching basic skills because students in such programs are motivated by immediate and practical concerns:

Without economic stability and fundamental language competency, the bilingual person is preempted from planning for a meaningful future. As has been suggested, language and life style play a key part in the ability of the bilingual person to assimilate and personalize the affective areas of seeking, obtaining and processing information.

The person with a limited-or non-English background tends to be more locked into an immediate environment response than is the English speaker. Thus choices or options are limited. Whereas career awareness is typically explored in the elementary grades, this experience may never occur for the bilingual. Awareness and career decisions may be totally interrelated in response to economic realities.

It is important to see the reverse of this situation. The preoccupation with job, health and the immediate future creates an attitude where careers, job requirements and skill acquisition becomes an excellent vehicle for introducing basic educational skills.

Never Give Up

"We made a promise,
We swore we'd always remember,
No retreat, baby, no surrender."

Bruce Springsteen

Springsteen's anthem has a line that goes like this: "There's a war going on out there, they say it's not ours anymore to win." Well, there is a war going on out there. No retreat, baby, no surrender. We not only can win it, we must win it.

Robert Lynch of the BOCES Geneseo Migrant Center in New York read the first draft of this booklet and agreed that early intervention is the long-range approach we need. But Bob, who knows and cares as much about this subject as anybody, isn't willing to write off all the migrants who have already dropped out or who will certainly do so in the next few years, before early intervention will help even if we make a major effort along that line. Bob wants an emphasis on High School Equivalency Programs and PASS and anything to help the students we failed to keep in school.

Migrant Educators must identify with the migrant community and individual migrant students so closely that giving up on kids who drop out will be unthinkable. If a high school diploma is little enough, less is too little by far.

The poor are properly skeptical about

education at best. They say they value education, but some of that is lip service. Their real feelings are ambivalent. One working class maxim used to be, "A diploma and a nickel will get you a cup of coffee." Today that would have to be "A diploma and a dollar will get you a cup of coffee," but the point is the same: the diploma isn't worth much without the dollar.

But isn't the diploma the path to the dollar? Yes and no. Another working class maxim says, "It ain't what you know, it's who you know." A migrant with a diploma cannot compete on even terms with middle and upper class graduates whose relatives and neighbors control the firms that do the hiring and promoting. Migrants are neither stupid nor naive. They know what the odds are against them.

Teachers talk about the intrinsic value of education, the way it enriches the life of the mind and spirit. That is true, but believing it is a luxury of the affluent. The poor are again ambivalent. One of our favorite stock figures is the "Educated Fool," the absent-minded professor, the egghead who has a Ph.D. yet lacks the practical ability to pound salt.

Education has only partially delivered for the poor, so they are only partially committed to it. They know it is the only game in town for them, yet they know the game is rigged against them. Their ambivalence is easy to appreciate.

So what do we owe the ones who drop out? If we believe in the brotherhood of man, if we believe in our common nationality, if we believe that migrants are our neighbors and our friends, we owe them a great deal. Migrant Education cannot stop at the classroom door or at the school parking lot. We must track the dropouts, get them vocational counseling, get them into job training programs, get them back to the books.

Dale Mann mentioned Atlanta's "Community of Believers." That model affords great promise for helping dropouts. You could enlist the aid of civic groups or, failing that, individuals from the community outside the school. What would these volunteers do? They would get to know the migrants. They would visit migrant homes and invite migrants to theirs. They would take them to their workplace, be it office or factory, to show them the world at work. They would ask about schooling, offer encouragement, interest, advice or assistance.

What kids need are people to give them a feeling that they belong, to give them experiences impossible except in the company of people from the community-at-large.

The mobility of migrants will make these relationships transitory, yet they can be valuable. They can reduce the distrust of society many migrants have, and they can reduce the distrust of migrants many ordinary Americans have. If you have a large pool of community people who have gotten to know migrant youth over a period of years, you may be able to help dropouts find work among a sympathetic community. Creating close ties among migrants and local business people and professionals can reduce the dropout rate while improving the situation for those who do drop out.

While some individuals will remain prejudiced against migrants in general or against constituents of the migrant streams in particular—Blacks or Hispanics, for example—most Americans are embarrassed by our dismal record in race relations and by our failure to eradicate poverty. Many will respond to appeals for help. But someone must take the initiative, must be the catalyst

to action. You and your fellow Migrant Educators can do it. Contact civic groups and offer to speak at their luncheons. Organize a picnic and invite people through the media. Use persuasion if need be, or moral blackmail in extreme cases. Affluent Americans carry a burden of guilt you can help them reduce by involving them in the lives of migrant families. When a migrant drops out of school, get your community of believers, your extended family of volunteers to try to help.

This is not a Utopian suggestion. This can be done without a lot of money. It is as American as a barn-raising, getting people of good will to work together to help those in need. There is a pool of idealism to be tapped if you take the initiative. Never give up on dropouts, or your own community.

Class and Race

Discussions of the dropout problem in the 'Sixties were frequently sidetracked onto the question of racism, because minority students felt that both the schools and the job market discriminated against them in similar ways, blatant and subtle. Because of the plain truth in this, we have addressed ethnic and cultural issues for the past two decades, with mixed success. At least the problem is no longer ignored, no longer swept under the rug as it had been earlier when Americans praised themselves for their melting pot and its amazing consensus. Today we not only admit that the melting pot does not melt every ethnic identity into some new homogenous blend, we recognize that the very idea has its drawbacks, that we might lose more vitality than we would gain stability. Certainly everyone in Migrant Education recognizes the virtues of healthy pluralism, and the right to retain one's cultural identity, one's ethnic pride. What we are just begining to admit, again, is the obvious fact that we have serious tensions between classes, between the affluent who rule and the poor who often chafe under that rule, however benevolent it may try to be.

We must recognize that migrants need money and good jobs if they are to benefit from education, not just vice versa. If all migrant workers suddenly earned $30,000.00 a year, we would face a very different set of problems. Money is not the ultimate measure of human worth, but the lack of money and the lack of political clout to get more money are fundamental aspects of this problem. Children of the affluent stay in school and delay gratification because of realistic exceptions that they will get good jobs and lead comfortable, secure lives. Children of the poor have no such confidence. The fact that a few of the brightest and most industrious migrants struggle to reach the lower and middle echelons of the civil service is little enough incentive to the mass of impoverished young people whose experience of school has been negative and whose dreams have withered on the vine. American society must recommit itself to equal opportunity if we are to live up to our highest ideals and help migrants to realize their potential.

Hatred of Schools: An American Tradition

Many students drop out for the simplest of reasons: they hate school. A large percentage of dropouts cite dislike of teachers as a primary reason for dropping out.

Why do they dislike schools and teachers? Are they crazy, or anti-social? Or is hating school a normal, American thing to do? Huck Finn hated school, but so did the brillant Henry Adams. Many of the students who stay in school do so because their families, their friends, their communities expect it of them, not because they enjoy themselves or love learning or consider the classes relevant. For students without all that extra-curricular pressure of family and community expectation, going to school can seem ridiculous. They go because we jail them for truancy if they do not go.

When I think back on all the crap I learned in high school, it's a wonder I can think at all.

Paul Simon, "Kodachrome"

We busted out of class, had to get away from those fools. We learned more from a three-minute record, baby, then we ever learned in school.

Bruce Springsteen, "Born in the USA"

Paul Simon and Bruce Springsteen are not lowbrow louts. They are popular poets giving voice to very widely shared attitudes. America has a deep native strain of anti-intellectualism, fostered at least in part by boring, petty, self-righteous schoolteachers and administrators. We, the educators, are "those fools" that the Bruce Springsteens run away from.

If we expect students to stay in school, we must make the experience less excruciating on the one hand, and we must demonstrate its relevance on the other. Simply keeping kids in school is self-serving, a way to protect our jobs and our programs and our turf, unless we can demonstrate tangible and intangible benefits from their remaining with us. One unbiased observer decided the students who dropped out might have logic on their side. This is from *Sweatshops in the Sun:*

The subject was supposed to be the discovery of ways to keep minority students in school so they could begin to learn the basic skills needed to take them out of the fields of poverty. If education cannot do that—and by and large it has not—then the black and the brown students who drop out are demonstrating more logic than the school administrators who seek to make them sit in class. If, after these youngsters stay in school for 12 or 13 years, they must return to Belle Glade and go each morning to the Loading Ramp to find work harvesting winter vegetables, what is the point of school?

Clinton Finch, a migrant dropout, explains why migrants leave school:

They don't go to school because they know they can have a job pushing a mop or picking potatoes. They say, I can't do anything better than I already have. And that's what makes them drop out!

As educators, we deserve to have faith in the power of education to enrich a life. Those of us from stable and affluent backgrounds must have the imagination and wit to realize that the situation confronting migrant children is very different from that of more fortunate young people; school is less pleasant, its rewards less certain.

We might compare the decision to drop out of school with the decision to migrate to America. Immigrants usually had both a push and a pull, the push being limited opportunities, the pull being the promise of a better life. We may push students out of school with a Chinese Water Torture of small failures and humiliations and disappointments, until the pull of a job, even a pretty crummy job, can become irresistible. When a migrant family is in desperate need of cash for day to day survival, a teenager may have real difficulty believing that uncertain long-term benefits outweigh the immediate need to help the family. At a certain level, pov-

erty pulls migrants out of school. One solution to the dropout problem is obvious: give migrant families more money, by raising their pay from the private sector and by increasing their support from the public sector.

Migrant Education's Report Card

Migrant educators can look back with pardonable pride on twenty years of concerted effort to upgrade educational opportunities for migrants. Students actually served by programs like HEP and CAMP have done remarkably well, with success rates in the 90th percentiles. However, only a small fraction of the total migrant pupulation has been in those programs and it is still too soon to say how great a difference their educational success, relative as it is in a nation as rich as ours where so many graduate from college, will make over their entire lives. HEP and CAMP have proven Michael Reed right that migrants can learn.

However, programs like HEP and CAMP are politically controversial in an age of budget-cutting, so you will hear arguments over the meaning of statistics. Gary Riley, author of the admirable study evaluating HEP and CAMP, warns us to approach quantiative data with great humility: "Extreme caution must be exercised when interpreting this data," he writes. How do we define success for a population which begins with such servere disadvantages? From the Gary Riley report:

CAMP Participant Outcomes. *One of the more difficult aspects of research on postsecondary educational progress and achievement is the determination of criteria for success. Today, it is the exceptional student who enters the University as a first time freshmen and emerges four years later from that school with a baccalaureate degree in hand. Closer to contemporary norms is the individual who takes a minimum of five years to complete the baccalaureate degree, having attended two or more schools in the process.*

Adding to the complexity of measuring academic progress is the fact that American higher education has increasingly focused upon the successful recruitment and admission of historically underrepresented students who, on the average, enter their first year of college with a considerable number of academic deficiencies which must be remediated in the course of completing one's undergraduate education. It is quite possible, for example, for a student to successfully complete a year of full time freshmen study only to learn that she lacks sufficient credits counting toward graduation to the classified as a sophomore. Developmental courses that are required of students with tested deficiences do not usually count toward graduation and, therfore, toward one's class standing. By one standard, such students have not made satisfactory academic progress. When they return to school the next year, they will continue to have freshmen class standing for at least one additional term. By other standards, however, these students have completed a year of full time study, have maintained a grade point average that is necessary to remain in school, and have persisted (i.e., returned for another year of school). Judging success is most difficult under the ambiguous conditions posed by these circumstances.

What do the people who participated in HEP and CAMP think of the programs? On the whole, they were happy with the experiences. Rather than pat ourselves on the back, let us look at two key areas—self-esteem and basic skills—where CAMP participants had surprising reservations.

First, self-esteem:

Interestingly, students expressed some reservations concerning the impact of program participation upon strengthening self-confidence as needed in setting high personal goals. Although the overall ratings in both HEP and CAMP programs are quite positive in this regard, those responding negatively serve as yet another reminder that HEP/CAMP students may require a great deal of compensating personal support to help them overcome the lack of self-confidence that often typifies this learner population.

This should remind us that our students *know* they are behind in the race for good jobs and the good life by the time they reach young adulthood. Recognition of their intrinsic worth and their ethnic identities is important but not in itself sufficient. Migrants heed continuing support and encouragement.

The situation is the same with basic skills. Despite all our emphasis on them, migrant students may start out so far behind that despite their gains, they remain behind as they enter the job market. They know this by the time they participate in HEP and CAMP.

Although generally quite positive in their ratings of Educational Support and Development, the respondents expressed less agreement that their program participation resulted in achieving desired levels of basic skill mastery—especially in math and writing. For many reasons, students often lack strong writing and math skills at the time of program entry in both HEP and CAMP. A great deal of progress may be demonstrated during the course of one's project participation, yet still leave the student feeling somewhat skill deficient in these areas.

We must work more effectivley at every level. Migrants can learn as much as anyone, but not if they get so far behind that even Herculean labors leave them feeling inadequate as young adults. We must do better before they begin school, in the primary grades, and especially in the middle schools if we are to make substantial progress.

Maturity: A Potential Plus For Migrants

Rios and Hansen note that migrants may mature faster than mainstream youths:

Socially, migrant children frequently are more mature than those in a settled family. The survival requirements of a family that has few, if any, associations with larger social groupings, such as neighborhoods, demand that the children become "young adults" very early in life.

Ilse Pitts of *Choice* makes a similar observation, along with some pertinent remarks about working with migrants as a way of learning and growing together:

These kids have a wealth of different life experiences, more than some of the rest of us. They've traveled a lot, they've moved around a lot. Many of them have a better sense of the real world than children that have never moved, that have grown up in middle class communities. As far as working with them in career education is concerned, I find it is a great challenge. I found when I first started working in career education my biggest fear was I didn't know about a lot of different occupations, that I came from a professional family and that I was working with children who came from families that were farm laborers, that worked

with their hands. We didn't even have plumbers or anything like that, plumbers or skilled technicians in my family I found in working with migrant children and in working with children in general, it didn't matter so much. I found it was very good and often very positive working with students to be able to tell them, "I don't know about this job either, let's find out together. Let's talk to somebody who has the job," and guiding students and helping them learn where they can find information. No curriculum can ever give you all the information about everything. Hopefully, what we're trying to do in career education through CHOICE is to help people learn how to learn. I found also that this overlaps very much into other areas of other curriculums, especially in secondary education. The point isn't that we all knew it before we started, it's that we're learning how to find out, we're learning how to learn.

Some Materials

There is an excellent ERIC Digest, "Career Education Counseling for Migrant Students," prepared by Ilse Pitts of CHOICE. Migrant teacher Ruby Wigginton recommends "Roles and Goals" from Argus Communications, "Career Directions" from the Changing Times Educational Service, "Career Decisions Game Number 450" from McGraw-Hill, "The Job Hunting Game" from Interactive Media, "Fun Things for Teaching in Career Awareness" from American Enterprises, Inc., "Developing Human Potential" from ERA Press, ' 'Choose a Career" spirit master cassette kit from Hampden Publications, and the "How to Apply for a Job" kit from Fairchild Publications. You will find no shortage of materials, and will soon redesign them for your classroom's specific needs.

Some Success Stories

Success is relative and ambiguous. The Gods gave Achilles a choice between a short glorious life with eternal fame or a long quiet life with utter obscurity. Being young, he chose the short glorious life, but when Odysseus visited him in Hades, Achilles knew he had made the wrong choice. In the United States, we too often measure success in material terms of fame and money, as if we had never learned the lesson that cost Achilles so much three thousand years ago.

Many migrants have achieved great things. Cesar Chavez is an obvious example, and so is Henry Lawrence of the Los Angles Radiers. They have nationwide fame. Most migrants, like the vast majority of nonmigrants, achieve success on more modest levels.

Here is a message from a successful migrant, Texas State Senator Gonzago Barrientos:

The potential of migrant students has often gone untapped in past years. I think one of the most important things that educators can do for migrant students is to show them how to dream—to set goals for themselves and their neighbors which are truly accessible through education. Success, just like poverty, can be a self-fulfilling prophency if you truly believe it is your destiny. This certainly does not mean a denial of the very real environmental impediments to success which exist for the children of migrant families. However, I believe it is of fundamental importance to instill within every child a positive sense of self-esteem and a belief in his/her own unique talents as the source of a meaningful and productive life.

A Migrant Career Honor Roll

Janelle Baker of Bringham Young University has prepared a list of role models for migrants. One hopes it will be published soon. The Migrant Dropout Youth Program produced an excellent pamphlet, "Migrant Portraits/Migrant Choices" with stories of successful former migrants. You must convince your students that they, too, can see their names on the migrant career honor roll.

The Bottom Line

Migrant Educators cannot afford to allow their teaching to become "academic" in the pejorative sense of that word. We must link school and marketplace in tangible, meaningful ways, creating a network of support to help with the transition from the classroom to the workplace. This can never be easy. A good education is a rich and complicated experience that transcends mere job training. Migrants deserve that richness and complexity. While they get it, they also need practical help with career preparation because many of the strengths wealthy children get from their environments are simply missing from the lives of migrants. What this means, in effect, is that students who enter school at a competitive disadvantage need even more from the school than students who enter with much more going for them. In practice, it is almost impossible to provide remediation, career training, and academic excellence at the same time for such a high-risk population. Still, that is what the migrants deserve, to develop their full potential, economic and creative. Migrant Educators must be magnficently effective if this is to happen.

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